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—ON THE—

Loss of the Steamship "Pacific,"

NOV. 4th, 1875.

—BY THE—

REV. GEO. MASON, M. A.,

RECTOR OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, NANAIMO.

NANAIMO, B. C.:

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1875.**

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Loss of the Steamship "Pacific"

NOV. 4th, 1875.

BY REV. GEO. MASON, M. A.

Speed on thy course, Leviathan of art!
Thou boast of modern science! Safely speed
From port to port with all thy living freight
Of human souls, more precious than thy load
Of earthly dross, exhumed from mountain depths,
Or washed with anxious toil from mingled sand
On river beds. Speed on in proud disdain
Of wind and storm! Obedient to thy will
The waves of ocean bear thee on thy way,
And lift in vain their crests of angry foam
To harm thy guarded bulwarks, or affright
The careful pilots of thy destiny!

The dark November clouds may low'r, the sun
Shroud its meridian brightness 'neath a veil
Of threatening mist:—dreaming of joys to come
In the gay City of the Golden Gate,
They heed not nature's frowns, who crowd thy deck
Thou spoiler of old Neptune's vaunted sway!
The happy children gaze with laughing glee
For the last time on their forsaken homes;
The merchant heaves a sigh of glad relief,

Pacific N. W. History Dept.

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2 LOSS OF THE STEAMSHIP "PACIFIC."

Expectant of his holiday from care;
With fondly ling'ring thoughts the maiden waves
Her ' Kerchief flag of tender, mute farewell,
While on the chilly breeze floats soft and low
Her parting strain—"Good bye, sweetheart, good
bye!"

Soon shall Columbia's snow-capt mountains fade
In evening shadows from their home-turn'd view,
Soon shall fond mem'ry's mirror of the past
Lose its reflections ' mid imagin'd scenes
Of unknown pleasures in the coming time;—
And all our winter gloom dissolving change
For the bright sunshine of the balmy West

Hush!—did'st thou hear?—was it the death-shriek
woke

The midnight slumbers of that silent home?—
Hush!—it is nought!—nought but the watch-dogs
howl

Of melancholy omen, boding ill;—
Or screech of night-bird hooting to the gale
In fiendish mockery of man's distress.
Sleep on, beloved ones! for a while sleep on
And gather up your strength for morning light!
A day of sorrows waits you! gird your selves
With prayer and lean upon th' Eternal love,
"Though He destroy, yet will I trust in Him!"
Be this your motto! and your quivering souls
Shall bear the shock uninjur'd, and along
The course of life shall presently sail on
In calmness to the haven, where, they rest.

But—hush—again! the news! the dreadful news
Has reached our shores! has paralyzed the hearts
Of all! Oh! say; it is not true! What! lost!

All lost! All! All! but onesnatch'd from the deep,
A solitary messenger of woe,
Left on the cruel waters to recount.
His tale of misery, the fatal crash,
The rush, the panic—accents of despair,—
The infant's wail,—the Mother's piercing cry,—
The brave man's fight with death, and chivalry
Unselfish even to his latest gasp.
And now another, rescued from the waves
But to confirm the tidings of their fate
Pants forth fresh horrors from the awful wreck.
All lost! No! No! the agony is o'er,
The dark, cold waters of destruction past,
And on the tearless shore they rest. God grant,
In peace awaiting now perennial bliss,
Purg'd from a'l earth-stains in th' o'er whelming
tide

By God's consuming Love, wash'd in the blood
Of Him whose dying pangs outweigh'd the sum
Of mortal agonies, who tasted death
For all, that all, who will, might never die,
But only sleep—Mother! she is not dead,
Tho' she return not, thou shalt go to her
In the far land; when sea shall be no more
And from its depths are yielded up the dead —
Pitiless Ocean! thou hast done thy worst!
We ask not this of thee,—to hurl us back
In ruthless scorn the forms of those we loved;
Harrowing our souls with hideous spectacle
Of marr'd remains, relinquish'd—but in vain
Hide them!—Oh! hide beneath thy briny pall
Corruption's spoils until the day of doom!
Thou can'st not rob us of th' immortal part!
Beyond the u'most fury of thy storms
The Spirit soars, and holds Communion still
With kindred hearts in voiceless sympathy.

Tis said the Royal Dane in olden time
Bade his obsequious courtiers place his throne
Before the advancing tide: with solemn pomp
He gave his sovereign mandate to the waves;
Rebellious to this delegate of heaven
But to th' Almighty ruler loyal still
Th' unconscious surf roll'd on and heeded not
The impotent usurper's futile word.
'Thus in his wisdom did the prince rebuke
The idle flatt'ers of his earthly power
And vindicate His Majesty who "holds
The waters in the hollow of His hand."
Well might we learn in these presumptuous days
A lesson from this simple tale of Eld.
Ye launch your monster vessels on the deep,
With scarce a thought of the Omnipotent,
The forces of the Universe obey
The magic sceptre science proudly wields,
Flush'd with your triumph Nature is defied--
Danger despised, till danger's self has come,
And finds you unprepared with all your arts
Against the common accidents of life!
The untamed billows mock your pigmy toys,
When mercilessly rushing on their prey
They gain their vantage, and the stricken ship
Sinks 'neath the pæan of their roar, an hopeless
wreck.

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